

September 8th: Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel text (Mt 1:1-16, 18-23): The Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile.

After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus

who is called the Christ.

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel”

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Today, Jesus' genealogy, the Savior that had to come and be born of Mary, shows us how the work of God is interwoven into human history, and how God acts in the secret and silence of every single day. At the same time, we can see his reliability to accomplish his promises. Even Ruth and Rahab (cf. Mt 1:5), foreigners, converted to the faith of the only God, were our Savior's ancestors.

The Holy Spirit, that mysteriously had to incarnate the Son in Mary, entered, therefore, into our history a long time before, and traced a path leading to the Virgin Mary of Nazareth and, through her, to her Son Jesus. “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel” (Mt 1:23). How spiritually delicate Mary's body, her heart and her will, must have been, to engage the attention of the Father and make her become the mother of “God-with-

mankind”; He, who had to bring the supernatural light and grace for the redemption of all of us. In this work, everything brings us to contemplate, admire and worship, through prayer, the greatness, the generosity and the simplicity of the divine action that will extol and rescue our human lineage through our Lord’s personal involvement.

Further away, in Today's Gospel, we see how Mary was advised she would conceive God, the Savior of his People. And let us realize that this girl, virgin and Jesus' mother, had to be also our mother. The special election of Mary, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Lk 1:42), makes us admire God's tenderness in his way of proceeding; because He did not redeem us —so to speak— “by remote control”, but by closely binding himself with our family and our history. Who could ever imagine God to be so great and so acquiescent as to so intimately bind Himself to us?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“A virgin in body, a virgin in mind, a virgin by profession. She is no recent and chance discovery, but the object of God's eternal predilection; foreknown by the Most High, prepared for Himself” (St. Bernard)

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“Human life passes through various phases of transition, which are often difficult and demanding and which require binding choices, renunciation and sacrifice. The Mother of Jesus was placed by the Lord in the decisive moments of salvation history” (Benedict XVI)

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“In the fullness of time the Holy Spirit completes in Mary all the preparations for Christ's coming among the People of God. By the action of the Holy Spirit in her, the Father gives the world Emmanuel ‘God-with-us’ (Mt 1:23).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 744)